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THE HEBREW AND BABYLONIAN ACCOUNTS OF CREATION

I.

JUST twenty-five years have elapsed since the late George Smith announced the discovery of some fragments of cuneiform tablets containing an account of creation according to the traditions of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The announcement at the time aroused a widespread interest chiefly because of the apparently striking parallels between the contents of the cuneiform tablets and the opening chapters of the book of Genesis. The fragments in question had been found by Mr. Smith in the collection which had been brought to the British Museum by Sir Austen Henry Layard from the ruins of one of the ancient palaces of Nineveh. In all only four fragments had been identified by Mr. Smith as forming part of a series dealing with the story of the creation, but such was the sensation aroused by a letter on the subject which appeared in the London *Daily Telegraph* of March 4, 1875¹, that Mr. Smith was again sent to the scene of

¹ George Smith followed this letter up by a communication on November 4, 1875, to the Society of Biblical Archaeology, which was published in the *Transactions* of the Society, vol. IV, p. 363 seq. In 1876 he embodied the results of his investigations in a popular volume, *The Chaldaean Account of Genesis* (London, 1876), which passed through many editions (and also appeared in a German translation (*Chaldäische Genesis*, Leipzig, 1876), and in which, besides discussing the creation fragments, he took up the Babylonian tales of a deluge and other stories and legends found among the cuneiform tablets. Since that time an extensive literature has been produced about the creation stories of the Babylonians and of their

Layard's labours for the purpose of making another search of the mounds for further fragments¹. As a result of George Smith's visits and of his labours among the tablets of the British Museum, a considerable number of additional fragments were discovered bearing on the same subject. Numerous other scholars in England, France, Germany, Holland, and the United States followed upon Smith's track, so that at the present time some twenty fragments of tablets have been identified as probably forming part of what, for the sake of convenience, we may call the Babylonian creation stories, and have been studied with sufficient thoroughness

relationship to the Old Testament. Out of this mass the following may be selected as the most important.

The most complete publication of the fragments with a translation and commentary is by Friedrich Delitzsch, "*Das Babylonische Welterschöpfungsepos*" (Leipzig, 1896, *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der Königl.-Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, vol. XVII, no. ii). A still later translation with comments is by P. Jensen, "*Assyrisch-Babylonische Mythen und Epen*" (Berlin, 1900), pp. 2-43 (*Schrader's Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. VI). For discussions of the fragments see E. Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, translated by Owen C. Whitehouse, vol. I, pp. 1-19 (London, 1885); a third edition of the German original, revised by Messrs. Zimmern and Winckler, is in course of preparation; H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* (Göttingen, 1895), with translations of the texts by H. Zimmern; P. Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strassburg, 1890), pp. 263-364; W. Muss-Arnolt, "The Cuneiform Account of the Creation," Revised translation, *Biblical World*, III, pp. 17-27; C. J. Ball, *Light from the East* (London, 1899), pp. 1-45; W. St. Chad Boscawen, *The Bible and the Monuments* (London, 1895); I. M. Price, *The Monuments and the Old Testament* (Chicago, 1900), chap. vii; J. P. Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Tradition* (New York, 1894); S. R. Driver, "Hebrew Authority," pp. 9-16, in *Authority and Archaeology, Sacred and Profane*, edited by Hogarth (London, 1899); H. Zimmern, *Biblische und Babylonische Urgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1900); H. Gunkel, "Genesis übersetzt und erklärt" (*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, ed. Nowack, Göttingen, 1901), Introduction and pp. 107-120; for further references see the Bibliography in Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston, 1898), sections V and IX, as well as chap. xxi of the book, which contains a full exposition of the "Cosmology of the Babylonians."

¹ Smith's first trip to Assyria was undertaken in 1873 at the instance of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, who in consequence of Smith's announcement of the discovery of fragments of the tale of the Babylonian Deluge, offered to defray the costs of the further excavations.

and success to permit us to make them the basis of a much more satisfactory comparison with the Hebrew traditions than was possible twenty or even ten years ago. All the tablets in question were found in a portion of the palace of Ashurbanapal which constituted the King's Library¹, a collection of which some 30,000 fragments have been recovered and which it is estimated numbered in its integrity not less than 200,000 tablets. Most of the tablets of the King's Library were, as he expressly tells us, copies made by his scribes from originals deposited in the temple archives of the great religious centres of ancient Babylonia, so that while the account of the Babylonian story of creation as we now have it dates from the reign of Ashurbanapal, 668-626 B. C., the actual composition belongs to a much earlier period, and it seems safe to assert that as early at least as 2000 B. C., and possibly some centuries earlier, the Babylonian creation epic was already in existence. Previous to the discovery of the cuneiform tablets our knowledge of the Babylonian cosmogony was derived² from some unsatisfactory fragments of Berosus' History of Babylonia preserved at second hand through Eusebius. These fragments must now be relegated to a position of secondary importance, and are to be used only in so far as they confirm or illustrate the cuneiform account. Besides the fragments of the tablets which form part of a single creation epic, we have some tablets which represent other versions that appear to have been current in Babylonia regarding the manner in which the world came into being. One of these versions is attached to an incantation text, in which an account of creation is incidentally introduced. The account is brief, and briefer for us because the tablet is only preserved in part³. There is also a fragment

¹ For a general account of the contents of the Library so far as recovered, see Menant, *La Bibliothèque du Palais de Ninive* (Paris, 1880); F. Kaulen, *Assyrien und Babylonien*, chap. iii (5th ed., Bonn, 1899).

² Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 21 seq.

³ Published by T. G. Pinches in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*,

consisting of only ten lines of text referring to the creation of cattle, wild beasts, and creeping things by the gods in unison¹. This fragment cannot belong to the version just mentioned or to the larger creation epic. It represents therefore a third version. These various versions regarding the creation of the world were produced through the agency of the various theological schools that flourished in Babylonia. In each the chief rôle was assigned to the particular deity who happened to constitute the central object of worship in the religious centre in which the version was produced. In parts of Babylonia at a certain period, the god Ea, a water-deity, was regarded as the creator of mankind²; in other religious centres a goddess was supposed to have given birth to mankind; and elsewhere, probably at Nippur, the god Bel was looked upon as the demiurge *par excellence*. For the present, however, these various versions may be set aside in favour of a single series of tablets forming a continuous narrative which alone is sufficiently well known to be made the basis of a comparative study between the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts, and which moreover is the only one containing a sufficient number of parallels to the story in Genesis to warrant the hypothesis of a relationship between the Babylonian and Hebrew creation traditions. That such relationship does exist may be set down as one of the results of modern scholarship about which there can no longer be any dispute. The parallels between the two accounts, while not so numerous as is currently supposed, are yet decisive on this point. Equally important, however, are the *divergences* in the two accounts. Some of these divergences have been noticed but they have not yet been studied with the close attention which they deserve, and, what is more to the point, their significance has not as yet

1891, p. 400 seq.; latest translation by Jensen, *Mythen und Epen*, I, p. 39 seq.

¹ Jensen, *ibid.*, p. 43.

² Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 441.

been placed in its proper light. It is the fate of problems in science to assume new phases from time to time. When George Smith's discovery was announced there was a strong tendency to take for granted that the Hebrews had borrowed the story in the book of Genesis directly from the Babylonians. This position is untenable, and in view of the new phases that the problem has recently assumed, it seems opportune to take up once more the question as to the nature, extent, and precise character of the relationship existing between the two accounts.

II.

The chief Babylonian creation story known to us consisted of at least six tablets, though we can be certain at present of the contents of five only. It is in itself a composite production, and represents the combination of different versions of the central episode. Curiously enough the main purpose of the narrative is not to tell the story of creation but to glorify the chief god of Babylonia, Marduk, who after the union of the states of the Euphrates Valley under Hammurabi, about 2200 B.C., became the head of the Babylonian pantheon. The production might, therefore, be termed a Marduk epic rather than a creation epic. The central episode is Marduk's conquest of a monster known as Tiamat, and since Marduk is the sun-god in his particular aspect as god of the vernal equinox, and Tiamat is (as the etymology of the name indicates) the symbol of the watery chaos brought about by the destructive storms of the long rainy season which is characteristic of the climate of the Euphrates Valley, the conflict between the god and the monster is a nature-myth representing the change from the rainy season which spreads destruction and desolation everywhere to the dry season which causes the waters to disappear, conquering Tiamat, as it were, and producing vegetation.

The first three tablets are devoted to a description of the conditions prevailing during the period of Tiamat's

supremacy and to the various unsuccessful attempts of the gods to subdue Tiamat and the army of monsters by which she is surrounded.

The opening lines of the epic have become famous since the days of George Smith:—

At a time when, above, the heaven was not named,
Below, the earth bore no name.
Apsu was there from the first, the source of both
And raging¹ Tiamat, the mother of all.
Their waters were gathered together in a mass.
No field was marked off, no soil was seen.
When none of the gods was as yet produced,
No name mentioned, no fate determined,
Then were created the gods . . .
Lakhmu and Lakhamu were created.
Until they were reared . . .
Anshar and Kishar were created.
Many days elapsed . . .
Anu [Bel and Ea were created] . . .
Anshar, Anu . . .

At this point the fragment breaks off. Brief as it is, it affords a clear view of the manner in which the Babylonians pictured the *primaeval* chaos. Apsu, signifying the deep, is the personification of the great ocean and is practically synonymous with Tiamat, which is equivalent to the Hebrew *T'hôm* occurring in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis as the name of the "watery deep." The massing together of the *primaeval* waters completes the vivid picture of chaos in this epic. The underlying view, however, is not that the heaven and earth did not really exist, but that they were entirely submerged, overpowered, as it were, by the watery chaos, and we shall presently see that Marduk in this epic is not specifically conceived of as the real creator of heaven and earth. The gods mentioned in the opening lines, Lakhmu and Lakhamu, Anshar, Kishar, Anu [Bel, Ea], belong to the oldest stratum of the Baby-

¹ The Assyrian term "*mummu*" is obscure. For a recent discussion of it, see Jensen (*Mythen und Epen*, I, pp. 302, 303), who now translates "Urform"—a most unlikely supposition.

lonian pantheon. Lakhmu and Lakhamu are associates of Tiamat, while the others appear to be opponents of the monster. It is not necessary for our purposes to enter into further discussion of the nature of these deities beyond remarking that the creation of Anshar and Kishar seems to mark the beginning of an opposition to the sway of Tiamat, which had hitherto been undisputed. With Apsu and Tiamat are associated a variety of monsters, a description of whom is furnished in two further fragments belonging to the first tablet. Tiamat, we are told, surrounded herself with—

..... great serpents,
 Sharp of tooth, merciless in attack.
 With poison in place of blood, she filled their bodies.
 Furious vipers she clothed with terror,
 Fitted them out with awful splendour, made them high of stature
 That their countenance might inspire terror and arouse horror,
 Their bodies inflated, their attack irresistible¹.
 She set up basilisks, great serpents, and monsters,
 Great monsters, mad dogs, scorpion-men,
 Raging monsters, fish-men, great bulls,
 Carrying merciless weapons, not dreading battle.

At the head of her army she places Kingu² whom she raises to the dignity of a consort:—

She raised Kingu among them to be their chief.
 To march at the head of the forces, to lead the assembly.
 To command the weapons to strike, to give the orders for the fray.
 To be the first in war, supreme in triumph,
 She ordained him and clothed him with authority.

To him she says:—

Through my word to thee, I have made thee the greatest among the
 gods,
 The rule over all the gods I have placed in thy hand.
 The greatest shalt thou be, thou, my consort, my only one,

¹ Dr. S. Weir Mitchell has suggested that the cobra is here described.

² Kingu the "chief" of the monsters must have occupied, in one version of the myth, the same position as Tiamat. His association with the latter is an illustration of the composite character of the Marduk epic which was above referred to.

and, handing him the tablets of fate, announces to him—

Thy command be invincible, thy order authoritative.

The appearance of the gods in the world is a menace to Tiamat. With the gods once in control, her sway must come to an end. On the part of the gods there is great terror of Tiamat, and they attempt at first to conciliate her, but without avail. Order in the world represented by the gods is not aggressive. It is chaos which manifests opposition to order. In the second tablet of the series, the god Anshar sends his son Anu with a message of pacification to Tiamat, but at the sight of her awful visage Anu takes flight. The god Ea is sent out as a second messenger with a similar mission, but he too fails. The second tablet, which is unfortunately in a lamentable condition, closes with Anshar's determination to send Marduk as a warrior fit to take up the fight with the monster. Joyfully he proceeds to the contest, and in an address to the assembled gods enters a claim to be regarded as their chief in case his efforts are crowned with victory :—

When I shall have become your avenger,
Binding Tiamat and saving your life,
Then come in a body . . .
In Ubshu-kenna¹, let yourselves down joyfully,
My authority instead of yours will assume control,
Unchangeable shall be whatever I do,
Irrevocable and irresistible be the command of my lips.

The third tablet is taken up with the preparations for the great contest. Anshar sends a deity Gaga to announce to Tiamat that Marduk is ready to take up the cause of the gods :—

Anshar your son has sent me
The desire of his heart he has entrusted to me.
Tiamat, our mother, is full of hate towards us,
With all her might she is bitterly enraged,

and the tablet closes with a description of a feast in

¹ The assembly-place of the gods.

which the gods indulge before Marduk is sent out to the contest.

The fourth tablet is the most important of the series. With true epic breadth the preparations for the fray are dwelt upon. Marduk is invested with supreme power by the gods, and as a test of his power performs a miracle by making a garment disappear and then appear again through the might of his word. The gods rejoice at this exhibition; in chorus they exclaim "Marduk is king," and the insignia of royalty, throne, sceptre and authority are conferred upon him.

Now go against Tiamat, cut off her life,
Let the winds carry her blood to hidden regions.

In addition to the weapons which he fashions for the contest, he constructs a net wherewith to enclose the life of Tiamat:—

The four winds he grasped so that she could not escape.
The south and north winds, the east and west winds
He brought to the net, which was the gift of his father Anu.
He created a destructive wind, a storm, a hurricane,
Making of the four winds seven destructive and fatal ones;
Then he let loose the winds he created, the seven;
To destroy the life of Tiamat they follow after him.

A most vivid picture is thus furnished of the god standing upright in his chariot, with his weapons about him and seven winds following in his wake. The sight of the god inspires terror as he approaches the hostile camp. Kingu starts back in alarm, and the associates of Kingu are terrified at their leader's discomfiture. Tiamat alone does not lose courage. Undaunted, Marduk brandishing his great weapon approaches her, and after denouncing her for the hatred she has shown toward the gods calls her out to a direct contest—

Stand up, I and Thou, come let us fight.

Superbly the rage of Tiamat is pictured:—

When Tiamat heard these words
She acted as possessed, her senses left her;

Tiamat shrieked wild and loud,
Trembling and shaking down to her foundations.
She pronounced an incantation, uttered her sacred formula.

The fight ends in the defeat of Tiamat, which is described in so graphic a manner as to require no comment :—

When the lord had spread out his net in order to enclose her.
The destructive wind which was behind him he sent forth into her face.

As Tiamat opened her mouth full wide,
He drove in the destructive wind, so that she could not close her lips.

As the strong winds inflated her stomach.
Her heart was beset, she opened still wider her mouth,
He seized the spear and plunged it into her stomach,
He pierced her entrails, he tore through her heart,
He seized hold of her and put an end to her life,
He threw down her body and trod upon her.

Marduk next attacks her associates. They try to flee, but he captures them all in his great net. He tears the tablets of fate¹ from Kingu and places them on his own breast. This act marks the final victory. Henceforth the gods with Marduk, and no longer Tiamat and her brood, control the fate of the universe. Marduk returns to the gods in triumph, is received with great rejoicing and presents and offerings are heaped upon him. The fourth tablet closes with the work of the god in establishing the order of the universe. Cutting the body of Tiamat in half, he fashions from it a covering for the heavens. At each end of the heavens he places a guardian to prevent the upper waters from coming out². This act clearly indicates the cessation of the rains. With the approach of

¹ These tablets of fate on the breast of Kingu and then of Marduk correspond in a measure to the Urim and Thummim of the O. T. which hung on the breast of the high priest and were used to determine oracles. See Muss-Arnolt, "The Urim and Thummim," *Amer. Journal of Semitic Languages*, XVI, 193-224.

² There are traces in the epic of the existence of a version in which Tiamat was not killed but merely bound.

the dry season the upper waters are held back through the power of the sun. The next act undertaken by Marduk is the placing of a limit to the great ocean known as Apsu. Above the ocean the earth appears shaped like a vault, and above the earth is the canopy of heaven formed of the body of Tiamat.

So far the Marduk epic embodies largely popular elements, but at this point the influence of the schools of speculative thought is apparent in the elaboration of the activity of Marduk in establishing the stations for the planets and stars. Marduk fixes the duration of the year, and divides the twelve months among the three planets, and, lastly, assigns a post to Nannar the moon-god and hands over to his control the night "as a means of marking off the days."

Marduk in an address to the moon specifies his duties. But at this point the tablet becomes defective, and the continuation of the epic is exceedingly obscure. Of the three fragments included by Professor Delitzsch¹, it is not certain whether they belong to our series, and if they do, their position in the epic cannot be determined in a satisfactory manner. We have, however, a fragment which may safely be put down as forming the conclusion of the epic. It is a rhapsody in honour of Marduk. The gods are represented as vying with one another in bestowing glorifying epithets upon the conqueror of Tiamat. He is hailed as the god of pure life; the god of favourable wind; lord of reason and mercy; creator of abundance and fullness; granter of blessings, who increases the things that were small; the god of the shining crown; the lord of incantations that cleanse from sin; the restorer of the dead to life. Bel and Ea, once leaders of the pantheon, transfer their names and with their names their prerogatives to Marduk. This transfer of the name is an indication of the transformation which the story has undergone. In an earlier form of the epic it was Bel, the chief god of Nippur,

¹ *Das Babylonische Weltschöpfungsepos* (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 18-20.

a personification of the storm, who through favourable winds caused the waters to be gathered within certain limits and thus made the earth appear. Elsewhere in Babylonia, Ea retained to the latest period his title of god of humanity, who makes earth habitable for mankind. But these older gods must yield their prerogatives in order to heighten the glory of the god of Babylonia, the younger Marduk. In the titles, therefore, bestowed upon Marduk we find some, as "the god of favourable wind," which clearly belong to Bel and others, like "granter of blessings," which are more applicable to Ea. Mankind is enjoined not to forget Marduk—

Who created mankind out of kindness towards them,
The merciful one, with whom is the power of giving life.
May his deeds remain and never be forgotten
By humanity¹, created by his hands !

The epic closes with the impressive summary of "fifty names" of great gods who, according to their fifty names, proclaimed the supremacy of his course. Marduk receives all the powers vested in the gods of the pantheon. The compiler of the epic has added to it an epilogue which illustrates the main purpose of the narrative. Once more all mankind, royalty and subjects, are called upon to praise Marduk's glorious deeds. As in the book of Deuteronomy, vi. 7, it is ordained that the laws of Jahweh be taught by fathers to their sons, so the Babylonian compiler enjoins:—

Let the wise and intelligent together ponder over it.
Let the father relate it and teach it to his son.
To leader and shepherd be it told.
Let all rejoice in the lord of gods, Marduk,
That he may cause his land to prosper and grant it peace.
His word is firm, his order irrevocable,
What issues from his mouth no god can alter.

It is clear from this rapid survey that the main purpose of the narrative, upon which the current views as to the

¹ Literally, 'the black-headed ones.'

relationship between the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts of creation are based, is the glorification of a particular god. For this purpose a great deed of Marduk is chosen, but merely as an illustration of a general theme. The fact that the conquest of Tiamat forms part of the Babylonian cosmogony is a matter of secondary significance. Indeed the epic is only in a restricted sense a narrative of creation. The nature myth embodied in it relates to an event of annual occurrence, and, while it is certain that the Babylonians never passed beyond the point of conceiving the beginnings of the universe as in reality merely the evolution from chaos to order, it would not be fair to draw this conclusion from the Marduk epic alone. For this reason one might well doubt whether, in its complete form, the epic furnished details of the creation of animals, or even of the creation of man. Marduk, it is true, is regarded by the Babylonian theologians as a general creator, but that merely by virtue of the universal supremacy attributed to him. As already stated, in other religious centres of Babylon, the creation of man was attributed to other gods. As for the animal world, there exists a fragment of the tablet above referred to¹ which certainly does not belong to the Marduk epic, and in which the creation of "the cattle of the field, the wild animals of the field, the creeping things of the field" is assigned to the gods in union, and the latter likewise are represented as creators of the heavens and the stars. Even in the Marduk epic, Marduk is not designated as one who formed the stars, but only as the one who assigned to them their positions and regulated their courses. Marduk in this epic is essentially an establisher of order, not a creator.

III.

The so-called second version of the Babylonian story of creation is much more fragmentary than the first, but like

¹ See p. 634.

the first it has been submitted to an editing process, through which it has been transformed into a glorification of Marduk. The circumstance that the fragment is embodied in an incantation text sufficiently shows, that in this case likewise, there did not exist any distinct purpose of setting forth a cosmological theory. The chief interest of this version for us consists in the greater detail into which it enters regarding the condition of the world when chaos reigned.

A holy house of the gods was not yet built on a holy spot,
 No reed had sprouted, no tree been formed,
 No brick was laid nor any brick edifice reared,
 No house erected, no city built,
 No city reared, no conglomeration formed.
 Nippur was not reared, E-Kur not erected.
 Erech was not reared, E-Anna not erected.
 The deep not formed, Eridu¹ not reared.
 A holy house, a house of the gods not yet constructed as a
 dwelling.
 The world was all a sea.

The general conception, it will be seen, is the same as in the first version. There is no reference to a contest between Marduk and Tiamat, and indeed Tiamat is not even mentioned. The appearance of the dry land is spoken of in an obscure line, and there are enumerated the ancient cities and time-honoured temples of Babylonia. There are evidences in the fragment itself that in an older form the creation of these cities was not ascribed to Marduk, and that neither Babylon, the centre of Marduk's worship, nor Marduk's chief temple E-Sagila, "the lofty house," was introduced. In this earlier form a goddess Aruru is designated as the creator of mankind, as well as of the animal world and of vegetation, but, in the hands of the priests devoted to Marduk's glory, Babylon is assigned the first place among cities and all the great religious centres, as

¹ Nippur, Erech, and Eridu are three of the oldest cities of Babylonia; E-Kur and E-Anna are the names of the chief temples at Nippur and Erech respectively.

well as the enclosure for the dwelling of the gods, and the production of mankind is attributed to the chief god of Babylon¹. Despite this transformation of the tale, Aruru comes in for her share, and is associated with Marduk in this particular deed of creating the seed of man. In its reconstructed form, the fragment also includes the creation of animals, of verdure, as part of the work of Marduk. The version shades off into a culture myth illustrating the gradual evolution from primitive conditions into a state of culture by the domestication of animals and building of cities :—

He created mankind,
 Together with Aruru he created the seed of mankind,
 The animals of the field, the living creatures of the field he created,
 The Tigris and Euphrates he formed in their places, assigned to
 them a place,
 Soil, grass, the marsh, reed, and bushes he created,
 The verdure of the field he produced,
 The lands, the marsh, the thicket (?),
 The wild cow with her young, the young wild ox,
 The ewe with her young, the sheep of the fold,
 Park and forests,
 The goat and wild goat he brought forth.

 Houses he erected, cities he built,
 Cities he built, dwellings he prepared,
 Nippur he built, E-Kur he erected,
 Erech he built, E-Anna he erected.

IV.

Turning now to the Hebrew account, we have first of all to take into consideration that according to the view currently held by modern scholars, two versions of the creation story have been incorporated in the book of Genesis. The one, embodied in what is known as the

¹ For the detailed proof and for the translation of the lines in question which belong to the later editors, see the writer's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 446-448.

"priestly code¹," and which we may call the "Priestly narrative," extends from the first verse of Genesis to the middle of the fourth verse of the second chapter; the second, the Jahwistic narrative, extends from the middle of the fourth verse of chapter ii to the end of the chapter. These two versions must not be placed on the same plane, and indeed one may question the accuracy of designating Gen. ii. 4^b-25 in its present form as a second version of creation. Its cosmological features are fragmentary, and it is characterized rather by what it omits than by what it mentions. Like the Marduk epic, it assumes the existence of the world; only a passing reference is made to the creation of animals, no division is made into birds, fish, and land animals, nor does it contain any reference to the great orbs of day and night, or to the planets and stars. Vegetation alone is not assumed, and this, it is said, was absent because "no rain had as yet fallen." Again, it is to be noted that trees are not mentioned. The chief thought in the mind of the compiler of the Jahwistic narrative is man. Even when speaking of the absence of vegetation he refers to the fact that "man was not there to till the soil," and from the seventh verse on to the end of the chapter he treats solely of the creation and early life of man. In this respect we have indeed a duplicate of the story regarding the creation of man, as depicted in the first chapter (verses 26-31), but it is to be noted that there are profound differences in these two versions about the creation of man. It would appear that the Jahwistic narrative of the creation is given to us in an abridged form, the compiler contenting himself with the complete story as given in the first chapter of Genesis, and adding only so much of the second version as actually complements the first. So far

¹ For a graphic view of these two versions, see the text in Professor Haupt's *Polychrome edition of the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis in Hebrew*, by C. J. Ball (Baltimore, 1896). For the views of modern scholars about the composition of Genesis see, e.g. Addis, *Documents of the Hexateuch* (London, 1893), or Bacon, *Genesis of Genesis* (Hartford, 1892).

as regards the manner in which man is created according to the Jahwistic narrative, there are no grounds for comparing it with either the Marduk epic or the second Babylonian version. There exists, however, a story in Babylonian literature, forming part of the great Gilgamesh epic¹, which contains some striking parallels to the conception found in Gen. ii of the creation of man out of the dust of the earth. We may, therefore, dismiss this so-called second Biblical version from our investigation, contenting ourselves with the single observation that only in the opening words,—

And no plant of the field was yet in the earth,
And no herb of the field had yet sprouted,—

is there a resemblance to the second Babylonian version which begins: "No reed had sprouted, no tree been formed." But the resemblance is slight and superficial and merely sufficient to warrant the assumption of a certain similarity in general conceptions. It by no means justifies us in affirming a dependence of the Hebrew version upon the Babylonian, or indeed any bond however remote between the two. We are thus thrown back upon the main story of creation in the Old Testament, the only real one as found in Genesis i-ii, 4 a. Here we have a tolerably full narrative, furnishing in a regular order the creation of all the essential divisions and phenomena of the universe.

In striking contrast both to the Marduk epic and to the second Babylonian version, it starts out with a direct announcement of a theory of real creation, and not merely an evolution from chaos to order. The declaration that Elohim "in the beginning created the heaven and earth" is a theological doctrine totally different from anything found in either of the Babylonian accounts. In the second verse, however, we have a valuable indication that this

¹ See *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, chap. xxiii, and also an article by the writer, "Adam and Eve in Babylonian Literature," in the *Amer. Journal of Semitic Languages*, XV, 193-214.

superb doctrine is intentionally introduced to replace an earlier theory which must have been current among the Hebrews at one time, according to which the existence of the earth (as among the Babylonians and other ancient nations) was assumed; for when it is said that "the earth was *tôhû wa-bôhû*," commonly rendered "waste and void¹," and that "darkness was upon the face of the *Têhôm*," that is "the deep," there seems no escape from the conclusion that not only the earth, but also the deep was without beginning. In verse 10 the dry land is represented as being created, and is called "earth," the same word being used as in the first two verses. Hence the reference to earth in the second verse is premature, and involves the supposition that the earth is already created. Even without pressing this point, the allusion to the *Têhôm* shows that the conception originally underlying the second verse, is practically identical with the Babylonian idea of a *primaeval* chaos when the waters covered everything:—

Apsu was there from the first, the source of both, and raging
Tiamat, the mother of all.

The introductory verse, therefore, of the book of Genesis which ascribes the creation of heaven and earth to Elohîm, is to be viewed as a protest against the earlier view—a distinct advance upon the notion that there was nothing earlier than the gods. It substitutes for the theory of evolution from chaos to order, a genuine doctrine of beginnings. More significant even as a direct contrast to the Babylonian conception of the supremacy of Marduk is the third verse of this chapter of Genesis regarding the creation of light. There was no room for such an act in the Babylonian story, and indeed it would have been illogical to introduce it. Marduk, it will be recalled, is a sun-god, or at all events a phase of the sun, and since, according to the current view of antiquity, it is the sun that gives light, a Marduk epic celebrating the achievement

¹ So R. V.; the A. V. has "without form and void."

of the sun-god could not possibly enumerate light as one of the creations of Marduk. That the conception in Genesis regarding light is rather vague, when looked at from the point of view of a modern physical definition, does not in any way enter into consideration. The significance of the doctrine which places above the world a creator who produces everything, even the light, lies in the circumstance that it entirely sets aside the prerogatives of a Marduk. I venture to think, therefore, that this third verse represents a direct protest against the Babylonian view which places a sun-god at the beginning of things. The Hebrew writer seems to say: "Marduk, a sun-god, a god of light, cannot be the creator of the world." He himself was created by a being who stands above the entire universe. The term *ôr* (the Hebrew word for "light") becomes according to this view a disguise for Marduk, or rather a substitute chosen as a means of illustrating the extent to which the Hebrew doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is to be carried. We thus find, sandwiched in between two verses representing what we may call the advanced Hebrew conception, the reminiscence of an earlier and more primitive theory held at one time by both Hebrews and Babylonians of a *primaeva* chaos presided over by T^hôm or Tiamat. Naturally, the attempt is made to bring the two views into accord, and, as a consequence, while the old mythological name T^hôm is retained, we have no longer a personified monster as a symbol of the inundations during the rainy season, but a literal interpretation of the old term, as the "deep" in general. The fact, however, that the Hebrew term T^hôm is used without the definite article (not only here but throughout the Old Testament) is a trace of its having once been personified and regarded as an actual proper name. If the view here taken of the real significance of Gen. i. 3 be correct, it will be evident that the question of the relationship existing between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts of creation, resolves itself into the thesis that there are traces in the

Hebrew narrative of views once held by the Hebrews which bear a marked resemblance to Babylonian conceptions, but that the Hebrew narrative in its present form not only represents an advance upon the earlier conceptions, but, while retaining traces of primitive views, is to be regarded as embodying a protest against theories of creation incompatible with the monotheistic view of the world. In order to reach a satisfactory view as to the conditions under which the Old Testament narrative was produced, we must note not merely the parallels between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts, but also the divergences between the two, and the chief effort of an investigation at the present time ought to account for and interpret these divergences.

In place of Tiamat and her associates exercising unrestricted sway, we find in this same second verse, the spirit of Elohim "hovering over the face of the waters," having the waters, as it were, under his protection, much as a bird hovers over her young. All traces of a conflict between god and the waters have disappeared. Elohim is not a god who needs to arm himself with weapons for the fray. There are no gods at his side to encourage him to stand up against chaos; by the power of his word alone everything comes into being, and accordingly, while the later mythological view survives in the first part of the second verse, the second half, emphasizing Elohim's control over the waters, illustrates the manner in which the Babylonian conception is transformed under the guidance of a totally different doctrine of creation. The reference to the existence of T^hôm at the beginning of things thus becomes the only trace in the chapter of earlier views which must once have been current among the Hebrews. The reference to the creation of light we have seen is an original feature in the Hebrew account, and this view carries with it the strictly original character also of the fourth and fifth verses in which we are told that Elohim distinguishes between light and darkness, and assigns names to both, calling the

one, "day," and the other "night." But in the sixth verse we encounter once more a reminiscence of the Marduk epic. The stretching out of a firmament which separates the waters into two distinct layers, an upper and a lower, correspond to Marduk's stretching out of the body of Tiamat across the heavens, forming a covering which, with the aid of the gods placed at either end, is to prevent the upper waters from passing beyond their bounds. The Babylonians picture the heavens as a semicircular vault which reached down to the surface of the Apsu¹. At one end of the vault there was an opening, out of which the sun passed in the morning, and at the other end an opening through which it descended at evening. In the Babylonian story, where great havoc is brought about by the rule of Tiamat, there is a reason for confining the upper waters to their place, for only in this way can Marduk establish his rule of order on earth. It is not enough for the sun to drive off the storm and rain, the clouds too must be driven back and held firmly in place. In the Hebrew narrative, on the other hand, the mention of a separating firmament creates a certain difficulty. The name given to this firmament is "heaven," but if in the beginning God had already created heaven and earth, there does not appear to be any necessity for introducing a second reference to the creation of heaven—this time as a firmament. On the assumption, however, that the Hebrew narrative was evolved from primitive conceptions and retains traces of these conceptions, while in a general way passing far beyond them, the difficulty vanishes. As a trace of a primitive view, the function assigned to the heavens is perfectly natural, nor is it difficult to see why this trace should have survived, for the view that the heavens actually separate between upper and lower waters is not limited to Babylonia, but is found among other nations as well, and had taken too deep root in the minds of the Hebrews to be entirely set aside. At

¹ See the illustration in Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, Pl. II, or Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, I, p. 503.

the same time it is important to observe the way in which the current idea has been transformed so as to fit in with a monotheistic view of the universe. Marduk makes the covering out of the body of Tiamat, but Elohim who creates by the power of his will requires no material out of which the firmament is to be made. So far then we have only two incidents of the Marduk epic preserved in the "Priestly" account of creation, a *primaeval* watery chaos and the formation of the firmament. The rest of the epic has been discarded.

It is to be noted, however, that while in the creation story as found in Genesis, most of the mythical and mythological elements have disappeared, elsewhere in the Old Testament, there are passages which are clearly reminiscent of a conflict between Jahweh and the aboriginal monsters who symbolized chaos. When, for example, in so late a production as Isaiah, chap. li, we read, verse 9—

Awake, awake, put on strength,
O Arm of Jahweh;
Awake, as in the days of old,
In the generations of ancient times.
Art thou not he that cut Rahab in pieces,
That pierced the dragon?—

the prophet manifestly has in mind an ancient tale parallel to the Marduk epic, with the rôle of Marduk transferred to Jahweh. Rahab the dragon is identical with Tiamat, and the resemblance extends even to such a detail as the piercing and the cutting of the monster in pieces. From Job ix. 13, where the "helpers of Rahab" are referred to as subdued by Jahweh in his anger, we learn that the Hebrews conceived the *primaeval* chaos to be surrounded by an army, just as Tiamat has, in her wake, Kingu and a host of awe-inspiring monsters. The Leviathan as described in the 74th Psalm (verses 13-17) represents another variant of the same myth, and the further details of the tale may be gathered from such passages as Isaiah xxvii. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 10; Job vii. 12, xli. 1 seq., &c. Gunkel,

Schöpfung und Chaos, pp. 29-114, has carefully gathered all these allusions, and by his luminous discussion of them has demonstrated beyond all doubt the persistency of the old myth in the mind of the Hebrews down to a comparatively late date. If then we find but faint traces of the Marduk epic in the first chapter of Genesis, the omission is not accidental but due to the transformation through which the old tale has gone in order to adapt it, not only to a monotheistic conception of the universe, but to bring it in accord with a view of Jahweh far removed from the period in which the Marduk-Jahweh epic represented the religious level reached by the Babylonians and Hebrews respectively.

We have seen that the question whether the Marduk epic contains an account of the creation of herbage and fruits cannot be satisfactorily answered. There hardly seems room or occasion for such work in the Marduk epic, concerned as it is chiefly, if not exclusively, with the conquest of Tiamat, and it is significant that the first act of Marduk after subduing the monster and forming a firmament out of her body is to measure out a limitation of the Apsu or deep which flows round and underneath the earth—assigning a position to the earth itself under the vault of heaven—and immediately thereafter to establish the places for the planets and stars. In the Biblical account for the third day there are in reality two distinct works, the one the gathering of all the waters into one place, in consequence of which the dry land appears, the other the production of herbs and fruits. That these two are distinct is indicated by the twofold introduction of the refrain, "And Elohim saw that it was good," once at the end of the tenth verse, and again at the end of the twelfth. We are justified in comparing the "Priestly" account of the appearance of the dry land with the reference in the Marduk epic to the formation of "Esharra," by which name the earth is designated. If the dry land (expressly called "earth") appears merely as a consequence of the gathering

of the waters into one place, the evident assumption is that the earth was already in existence. The picture which the writer must have had in mind agrees admirably with climatic conditions in Babylonia, where at the end of the rainy season the submerged districts reappear as the waters recede. Accordingly, the gathering of the waters into one place corresponds as closely as we have reason to expect with a line in the Marduk epic where it is said of the god, that "he measured the structure of Apsu," that is, he ordains that the great body of waters known as the deep should flow round and underneath the earth, which thus in a measure rests on the Apsu itself. In Genesis the gathering of the waters is called *yammim*, which, since the plural in Hebrew, as in the Semitic languages in general, covers a wider range than in Aryan tongues, may legitimately be regarded as the Hebrew equivalent of Apsu, not "seas" therefore, but "the great sea," the Okeanos, of the Greeks.

The section which follows, namely, verses 11 and 12, referring to the herbage and fruits, has, as already indicated, no equivalent in the Marduk epic, and though with reserve I venture to raise the question whether this creation of vegetation does not again represent an addition to the Biblical narrative due to its transformed character from a mythical tale, representing the evolution from chaos to order, to a monotheistic narrative of real creation. Marduk's rôle in the epic is limited. He is the sun-god, and as such he establishes order in the universe, but his particular domain is in the heavens. We read in the epic that "he passed through the heavens, he inspected the expanse." As the sun-god he is an overseer who sees to it that the planets and stars are in their proper places, so that the scene of the Marduk epic is chiefly in the upper regions, and indeed a version of the epic may have existed which placed the scene *exclusively* in the heavens. The divine power in Babylonian mythology who produces vegetation and is the source of fertility is the goddess

Ishtar or Nanâ in some form or other. And while this did not prevent the devotees of Marduk from attributing all fertility to Marduk, still there would hardly be occasion to do so in a narrative which celebrates him so largely as a solar god. At all events if this was done in any version of the Marduk epic, it was not introduced at the point where the Hebrew narrative places it, between the appearance of dry land and the regulation of the movement of the heavenly bodies. Verses 11 and 12 therefore of the "Priestly" narrative represent a decided departure from the Marduk epic.

When we reach the fourth day of creation, numerous difficulties present themselves in the Hebrew text as it now stands, which we cannot stop to discuss. Suffice it to say that while in general there is a correspondence between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts of the functions of the stars and planets, there are again abundant traces that the Hebrew narrative has passed through a period of transformation independent of Babylonian influences. In the first place all the bodies of heaven are created, whereas in the Marduk epic their existence is assumed and they are merely assigned positions and functions. Again in the Biblical narrative the great lights in the expanse of the heavens served two or, according to the Greek version¹, three purposes: (1) to distinguish between the day and night; (2) to shine upon the earth; (3) to serve as signs² and seasons and days and years. In the Babylonian narrative this last function is divided: (1) the stars are set up as constellations and serve to mark off the years and months; (2) the moon is fixed as the luminary of night and for marking off the days. There is no reference in the Babylonian narrative to the function of shining upon

¹ See the text (Gen. i. 14) in Swete's edition.

² The addition of the words "as signs" in the Hebrew narrative is interesting. It is evidently used as an astrological term and refers to a belief which the Hebrews in common with all nations retained to a very late period, namely, the deriving of omens from the position of the stars.

the earth and the omission can hardly be accidental. The heavenly body which one thinks of in the first instance as having this function is the sun, but, this being Marduk himself, it is natural that the function could not be referred to. The shining of the sun is the starting-point of the epic. In the "Priestly" narrative, however, the creation of light is directly ascribed to the power of Elohim, and corresponding with this, there is included among the works of the fourth day the creation of the sun which is designated as the "great light for the rule of day." This addition marks another step in the complete displacement of Marduk.

V.

With the completion of the fourth day all further means of comparing the "Priestly" account of creation with the Marduk epic ceases, owing to the gap in the latter. We are obliged to fall back upon the second Babylonian version, in which the creation of animals and of all living creatures is attributed to Marduk, but it has already been noted that Marduk has in this version replaced Aruru, who as goddess of the earth is the real producer of animal and vegetable life. It may be admitted therefore that, inasmuch as we have an actual instance of the functions of an earth-goddess being transferred to Marduk, an account may have existed in some Marduk epic, parallel to verses 20-23 of the "Priestly" narrative, in which the creation of animals is described. Assuming such to be the case, the only change required in transforming the old tale to the level of religious thought reached in Genesis was to transfer to Elohim the function ascribed to Marduk.

In the case of the creation of man, the problem of comparison between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts is complicated by the existence in Genesis of two decidedly variant versions of that event, i. 24-31 and ii. 7-9. That, according to the tradition embodied in the Marduk epic, as well as in the second Babylonian version, Marduk

created mankind follows from a passage in the closing chapter of the series, which reads:—

The lord created mankind out of kindness toward them,
The merciful one with whom is the power of giving life.

Furthermore, if Delitzsch¹ is right in placing a fragment containing an address to mankind as part of the epic, we have a parallel to Elohim's address at the close of the first chapter of Genesis, but it should be added that there is absolutely no similarity between the two addresses. In the address to mankind as given in Gen. i. 28, two thoughts are emphasized; the first, that man is to multiply and increase, and the second, that he is to have dominion over the animal world. To this there is added, in i. 29-30, a second speech, in which the food of man is prescribed. The ordinance to multiply and increase also applies to the animal world (Gen. i. 22), but man alone is singled out for dominion. This latter thought is hardly Babylonian. In the Babylonian religion it is the gods who have dominion or their earthly representatives, the kings. The Hebrew tradition ascribing dominion to mankind in general breathes the republican spirit so prominent in the postexilic Pentateuchal legislation which enters a protest against royalty in making no provision for a temporal power, and goes so far as to curtail even the priestly prerogatives by preaching the doctrine that the entire nation is holy and a kingdom of priests (Ex. xix. 6). In Babylonia, marked by a powerful monarchical control and an all-pervading priesthood, it would have been dangerous heresy to declare dominion to be a function of the population, even though it be over the animal world. As for the paragraph about food, it embodies, as it would appear, an early tradition which relates to the exclusion of meat from man's diet². At all events, the speech has no place in the Marduk epic, and further questions involved need not be treated here.

¹ *Weltschöpfungsepos*, p. III.

² See Gunkel's *Genesis*, p. 104, note.

The next point to be considered is the famous phrase in Gen. i. 26, which declares that man was made in "the image and likeness of Elohim." Rightly interpreted, the "Priestly" version of the creation of man refers not to the formation of the first man nor even to the first pair, but to mankind in general. The passage reads: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, so that they may have dominion &c. . . . male and female he created them." A verse like the latter is clearly applicable, not to a single pair, but to all the human race, and accordingly the speeches in ver. 28 and vers. 29-30 constitute addresses to mankind in general. Similarly, in the so-called second Babylonian version, it is not a single pair which is created, but mankind in general. The same applies to the passage above quoted from the Marduk epic. In so far there is a parallel between the Babylonian view and the "Priestly" account. This being admitted, it would appear natural to refer the phrase in the "image of Elohim," which strikes one as strange in a monotheistic narrative, to a Babylonian parallel.

In a land where the statues of the gods represent human forms, the thought of man made in the image of the gods would arise as a justification for the manner in which the gods were portrayed. Moreover, the deification of human beings¹—naturally only the kings—would act as a further motive in establishing a view of material resemblance between mankind and the gods. The verse appears then to be a survival of an anthropomorphic conception of the deity, and if it be remembered that even the children of the present day find it difficult to conceive of a deity without a human form—and there are many grown children living even in the twentieth century—it is certainly not surprising that the verse should have been retained in a collection like the Old Testament that contains such numerous instances of anthropomorphisms. It is, however, only as a survival that the verse is explicable, for had the

¹ See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 167 seq.

"Priestly" narrative been produced exclusively from the standpoint of a monotheistic conception of the universe, free from earlier theories and doctrines, it is quite inconceivable that the verse should have been deliberately introduced. As a survival we can account for it, but not as a verse which originated with the same writer who declares that Elohim said "light be, and light was." Another proof that the verse was retained from an earlier form of a creation narrative is the addition of the term "according to our likeness." This term is added without a conjunction as an explanatory term with the evident intent of weakening the anthropomorphism of the phrase "in the image of Elohim." The old phrase no longer satisfied an advanced age, and a new turn was accordingly given to it by the supplementary expression. The writer warns us, as it were, not to interpret the word literally. He seems to say to us: Be careful! The verse does not mean that God has a human form, but that man is like unto God, has divine attributes. The writer thus paves the way for the homiletical interpretation of a text which still furnishes a fertile subject to many a preacher of our own days.

We come, finally, to the seventh day, and with it to the institution of a day of rest. There is absolutely no evidence that the Babylonians divided the work of creation, whether accomplished by Marduk, or Ea or Bel or Aruru, into a period of days. The "Priestly" division into seven days rests evidently upon the institution of the Sabbath, and while the Sabbath in so far as it emphasizes a special significance of the seventh day in the week has affiliations with Babylonian ideas, a Sabbath celebrated *every* seventh day without reference to the phases of the moon is the Hebrew addition to the older notion. The Babylonians had a word *Shabbatum*, which they applied to an inauspicious day occurring five times a month, on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th of each month, counting from the beginning of each lunar month. On these days it was dangerous to approach the gods who were liable to anger,

and certain measures of a precautionary character had to be observed, though only as it would appear by the kings. In an article on the original character of the Hebrew Sabbath (*American Journal of Theology*, April, 1898), I have tried to show that the Hebrews, or the remote ancestors of the Hebrews, starting from this point of view, developed independently the institution of setting aside a whole day celebrated every seventh day (without reference to the lunar phases), and observed as the day of rest because sacred to Jahweh. This distinctly Hebrew Sabbath assumed tremendous importance in the development of the Jewish religion. The entire worship of Jehovah was centred around it; it became the bulwark of the religion. As the most characteristic external mark of that religion, it was brought into connexion with the two most fundamental events in mankind's history from the Jewish point of view, namely the work of creation, the beginning of all history, and the exodus from Egypt, which marks the creation of Israel as a people. Resting in part therefore upon the tradition of the antiquity of a sabbath in some form, in part inspired by the supreme significance accorded to the distinctly Hebrew Sabbath, the doctrine arose which places the establishment of the Sabbath at the beginning of time. In no more forcible way could the sanctity of the institution be impressed upon the people than by the assumption that Elohim himself recognized it, by dividing the work of creation into six days and setting the example for all times by resting on the Sabbath. Here we must rest our investigation. It is not possible within the limits of a single article to enter into many details that might be touched upon¹. My main purpose being to make clear the nature of the divergences existing between the Hebrew

¹ It is my purpose ere long to issue a volume, *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*, in which I shall gather together and present in detail the results of comparative studies on such themes as the Creation, Paradise, Adam and Eve, the Sabbath, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, Life after Death, and Babylonian Influences in the Pentateuch.

and Babylonian accounts of creation, the illustrations advanced furnish, I think, a sufficient basis for drawing the conclusions to which I now pass.

VI.

The divergences noted do not represent such features as can be placed in the category of the accidental or the unimportant.

Such points as the creation of light and of the sun, both significantly absent in the Marduk epic, the direct assertion that Elohim created heaven and earth, the existence of neither being therefore assumed, the total absence of any reference to the conflict with Tiamat, the manner in which mythological allusions have been weakened or avoided, the introduction of the creation of plant life between the appearance of the dry land and the creation of the light and stars, the remarkable addresses of Elohim to mankind, and lastly the division of the work of creation into six days with the institution of the seventh as a day of rest in imitation of a divine example, such features, which distinguish the "Priestly" narrative, can only be satisfactorily accounted for as the result of totally different influences under which the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts, respectively, were produced.

Interpreted in their true light, the divergences represent the profound modifications which earlier and primitive views of an evolution from chaos to order underwent as a result of continuous religious development in the direction of what for want of a better name we may call ethical monotheism. The process involved in this modification which changes a mythological narrative into a sublime theory of creation must necessarily be regarded as one of long duration. On the other hand, the resemblances between the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts, the traces in the Hebrew account of primitive views, point of course to a contact at one time between the ancestors of the

Hebrews and the inhabitants of Babylonia, but the point of contact must lie at a remote period. To assume that it was during the exile that the Hebrews became acquainted with the Babylonian story involves us in difficulties, much greater than those involved in the traditional view that the first chapter of Genesis represents a special revelation vouchsafed to Moses. The Jews of the exile were subjected to Babylonian influence in art and literary form, but they were not open to the religious ideas which prevailed in Babylonia. Their religious thought had been moulded, under the influence of their prophets, by the events of the two centuries preceding the fall of Jerusalem. The exile was the period adapted to the clarification of the doctrines preached by Amos, Hosea, and the earlier Isaiah. But the people, especially those who were carried into captivity to the banks of the Euphrates, were too advanced to accept a view of the universe which would be in utter disaccord with the idea of the prophets. Moreover, had the Babylonian story been taken over by the Hebrews at so late a day it would have borne a *much closer* resemblance to its model than is actually the case.

The divergences which have been pointed out are in many cases a direct protest against the views embodied in such a production as the Marduk epic. But if the intention of the compiler had been merely to produce a narrative which should represent a contrast between Elohim or Jahweh and Marduk, it is not conceivable that any trace of a mythological character should have been retained, and he would have been particularly careful to avoid mythological terms like T^hôm. The theory which best accounts for the facts is that the Hebrews must have been in possession of primitive traditions about the way in which the world came into being long enough for those traditions to have taken an ineradicable hold upon the people; and since this earlier tradition forms a close parallel to Babylonian views and reflects climatic conditions peculiar to the Euphrates Valley, the further conclusion is justified

that the Hebrews and Babylonians at one time held certain mythological notions in common. On the other hand, in order to account for the transformation from primitive to advanced conceptions, we must likewise assume that the earlier tradition accompanied the Hebrews through the long course of religious development which they underwent, until the time when the contrast between the old and the new became so marked as to call forth a combination narrative in which, by giving certain turns to old verses and by introducing new features, the transformed legend might serve as a worthy illustration of the supremacy of a single divine power, and while still retaining traces of conceptions belonging to an earlier age, would bear on its face the stamp of a protest against these conceptions. For this process a long period is required—how long depends upon the question, upon which we cannot enter here—when the decided departure in the life of Hebrews from common Semitic lines begins. Some scholars¹ think of the period represented by the El-Amarna tablets (1500–1400 B.C.)² as the time when Babylonian legends may have found their way to Palestine. That Babylonian influence at this time was strong in Palestine must be admitted, and yet I am inclined to go back still further³, and interpret the tradition found in Genesis which connects

¹ So Zimmern, who adheres to this view in his latest utterance on the subject, *Biblische und Babylonische Urgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1901).

² A series of cuneiform tablets found in Egypt in 1887 and forming part of the Egyptian archives for the centuries named. See for an account of these tablets Carl Bezold, *Oriental Diplomacy* (London, 1894), and for a complete translation Winckler, "The Tell el-Amarna Tablets," (English and German edition), in Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. V (London and Berlin, 1896).

³ Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 168–170, is of the opinion that the Hebrews found the myth current in Canaan upon entering the country. See also his recent commentary on Genesis (in Nowack's series), pp. 114–119, where the position taken by him in his earlier work is reaffirmed. One does not see why, if one goes back so far, the Hebrews or some branch of them should not have carried the story from Babylonia into Palestine.

the migration of Hebrew clans into Palestine from the Euphrates Valley associated with the name of Abraham, as the real solution of the problem. The conditions of the East are strangely alike at all times. What happens to-day took place thousands of years ago. The Bedawin on the banks of the Euphrates belong to the same race that has almost from time immemorial sent offshoots from the steppes or the highlands of Arabia into the Euphrates Valley. The old Babylonian states were at all times menaced by these hordes of Arameans or Arabs who moved up and down along the western borders of Euphratean culture. Many of these bands made more or less permanent settlements, and became to a certain extent assimilated to Babylonia in ways and manners; and with the ways and manners they adopted the Babylonian religious ideas, and became familiar with Babylonian legends and traditions. The Pentateuch expressly traces the Hebrews to these wandering Arameans (Deut. xxvi. 5), and the theory therefore which places the contact between the direct ancestors of the Hebrews and the Babylonians at the time when, superinduced by movements (the reasons for which we can only dimly discern), certain of these wandering Arameans passed up the Euphrates and crossed over the mountains down the Jordan, and settled finally to the west of the Jordan, satisfies most of the conditions needed to account for the existence of Babylonian legends of creation among the Hebrews. It is such a theory also that accounts for the persistent hold of those old tales until the time when they are transformed without being wholly obliterated. From a period therefore as early as 1800 B.C., the Hebrews or the ancestors of the Hebrews may be regarded as having been acquainted with the substantial elements of the Marduk epic, which they developed in their own way and under influences independent of Babylonian ideas during the long period of a religious progress unique in the annals of mankind. The fact that the definite literary shape to the Hebrew traditions regarding creation was not

given till the period of the Babylonian exile, or perhaps even after the exile, does not affect the conclusion as to the substantially original character of the Hebrew narrative in many of its essential features, and as to the comparatively high antiquity of some of those features, if not of all. It may, I think, be set down as a safe dictum drawn from the past experience of the results of archaeological investigations, that religious traditions as well as religious customs are apt to turn out older than they seem.

MORRIS JASTROW, Junr.